

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: STATEMENT AFTER ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S MEETING
WITH KING HUSSEIN, MARCH 5, 1978, AMMAN AND FOLLOW-UP BRIEFING
BY PRESS SPOKESMAN GEORGE GHERMAN

BEGIN STATEMENT:

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON HAD A VERY GOOD TALK WITH HIS
MAJESTY ABOUT HIS MISSION. HE PARTICULARLY APPRECIATED THIS
OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A THOROUGH AND WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION WITH
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HIS MAJESTY ON THE WHOLE COMPLEX OF ISSUES INVOLVED IN OUR
CONTINUING EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF THE
ARAB-ISAELI CONFLICT. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY REPEATED TO
HIS MAJESTY PRESIDENT CARTER'S PROMISE TO REDOUBLE AMERICAN
EFFORTS TO HELP THE PEACE EFFORTS MOVE FORWARD. ASSISTANT
SECRETARY ATHERTON'S MISSION IS A DEMONSTRATION OF THOSE EFFORTS
TOWARD AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. HE EMPHASIZED TO HIS MAJESTY THE

AMERICAN CONVICTION THAT THE SETTLEMENT WE ALL SEEK MUST RESOLVE ALL THE ISSUES, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, PEACEFUL RELATIONS, WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES, AND THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING THIS DIALOGUE WITH HIS MAJESTY, AND TO HEARING HIS IDEAS AS THE MISSION GOES FORWARD.
END STATEMENT

2. TRANSCRIPT OF FOLLOW-UP REMARKS BY PRESS SPOKESMAN GEORGE SHERMAN: I AM ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON'S PRESS ADVISOR AND I THINK THAT FOR SHORTHAND YOU CAN SAY SPOKESMAN. THIS IS NOT A FORMAL BRIEFING, WHAT I THOUGHT IS THAT THERE MAY BE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STATEMENT WHICH I ASSUME YOU ALL HAVE. LET ME JUST GIVE YOU A FEW OF THE MECHANICS OF WHAT HAPPENED TODAY. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY MET WITH THE CHIEF OF THE ROYAL COURT ABDUL HAMID SHARAF FOR TWO HOURS AT THE ROYAL DIWAN, THEN HE WENT ON TO A MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE HASSAN WHICH LASTED FOR 45 MINUTES IN THE CROWN PRINCE'S OFFICE, THEN AT 1:45, HE HAD AN HOUR'S MEETING WITH HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN BACK IN THE ROYAL DIWAN. WE WILL BE LEAVING FOR SAUDI ARABIA, TO RIYADH, TOMORROW AFTERNOON AT ONE O'CLOCK AND THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ALTHOUGH HE WILL NOT HAVE ANY FORMAL DEPARTURE REMARKS, WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AT THE TIME SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY FOR HIM. I AM OPEN TO QUESTIONS. WE REALLY DON'T HAVE VERY MUCH TO SAY BEYOND THE STATEMENT BUT ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE, I WILL TRY TO ANSWER.
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QUESTIONS: DID MR. ATHERTON CARRY ANY MESSAGE FROM ANY ISRAELI LEADER TO HIS MAJESTY OR TO JORDANIAN LEADERS?

ANSWER: IT WAS NOT REALLY THAT KIND OF A MEETING. IT WAS A MEETING WHERE THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY GAVE A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE TALKS HE HAS BEEN HAVING IN CAIRO AND JERUSALEM WITH BOTH THE EGYPTIAN AND THE ISRAELI LEADERS. HE DID NOT HAVE A SPECIFIC MESSAGE, NO.

QUESTION: I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS FROM THE JORDAN NEWS AGENCY (JNA). FIRST, MOST ARABS HAVE A FIRM BELIEF THAT WITHOUT REAL STRONG PRESSURE FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE ISRAELIS, THE ISRAELIS WILL NOT CHANGE THEIR PRESENT ADAMANT ATTITUDE. DO YOU THINK THE AMERICANS ARE READY TO EXERT SUCH PRESSURE?

ANSWER: I THINK PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SPELLED OUT MORE THAN ONCE THE DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO HELP IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO GET A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. DURING HIS RECENT TALKS WITH RESIDENT BADAT IN WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT CARTER SAID THAT THE U.S. WILL BE REDOUBLING ITS EFFORTS TO THIS END. ASSISTANT

SECRETARY ATERNTON'S MISSION IS A DEMONSTRATION OF THAT DETERMINATION.
NOW OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE IS TO HELP OBTAIN A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH WILL FORM THE FRAMEWORK OF R NEGOTIATIONS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WHICH ALL THE PARTIES SEEK. TO GET THAT SETTLEMENT, ALL THE PARTIES MUST BE ENGAGED IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS.
THE EFFORT THEREFOR TO GET

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A DECLARATION IS THE FIRST STEP IN TRYING TO OBTAIN A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODAY, TALKING WITH KING HUSSEIN, WENT OVER IN GREAT DETAIL THE TALKS HE HAS BEEN HAVING WITH THE ISRAELIS AND THE EGYPTIANS TOWARD THE END OF GETTING THAT DECLARATION. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST MUST BE BASED ON A COMPROMISE AND THE EFFORT OF THE UNITED STATES IS TO HELP THE PARTIES OBTAIN THAT COMPROMISE.

I THINK WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT PRSSURE, OUR FEELING IS THAT THE DETERMINATION EXISTS ON BOTH SIDES TO MAINTAIN THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. WE FEEL THAT THE BEST OPPORTUNITY
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IN 30 YEARS EXISTS FOR DECISIVE MOVEMENT TOWARD THE OVERALL SETTLEMENT. INSOFAR AS PRESSURES EXIST, THEY ARE THE PRESSURES THAT EXIST IN THE SITUATION ITSELF AS BOTH SIDES MAKE EFFORTS TO OBTAIN THE COMPROMISE NECESSARY FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENTM QUESTION: AS A RESULT OF THE PRESENT SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY BY MR. ALFRED AThERTON BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS, DO YOU BELIEVE THAT DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED COULD BE RESUMED SOON?

ANSWER: I THINK IT IS CLEAR THAT THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, WHICH WAS AFTER ALL THE FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S MEETING WHICH WAS HELD IN JANUARY IN JERUSALEM, IS A STEP TOWARD OBTAINING THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. I CANNOT PREDICT WHEN THERE WILL BE A RESUMPTIONOF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BUT THE POSITION OF THE U.S. HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT THE SETTLEMENT MUST BE REACHED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS BETWEE THE PARTIES THEMSLEVES.

QUESTION: IN YOUR STATEMENT HERE, THE SECOND HALF SAYS (QUOTE) TO REACH A SETTLEMENT THAT RESOLVES ALL THE ISSUES INCLUDING, OF COURSE, PEACEFUL RELATIONS, WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES AND THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS (END QUOTE) TWO PARTS OF THAT SENTENCE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTING. THE USE OF THE WORD "WITHDRAWAL" BEING PERHAPS PURPOSELY AMBIGUOUS AND "THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS." IS IT FAR FOR US AS ARABS TO TAKE THESE TWO PHRASES AS BEING INDICATIVE OF PHRASEOLOGY THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE GETTING CLOSER TO ACCEPTING AND BEING SIMULTANEOUSLY IN THE SECOND ONE "PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS" A STEP FORWARD FROM THE REFERENCE TO REFUGEES ONLY IN 242?

ANSWER: I THINK THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO SPEAK FOR ITSELF ON THESE ISSUES. THIS IS A STATEMENT PUT OUT BY THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND IT IS A STATEMENT OF OUR POSITION. AND ASTO INTERPRETATIONS OF WHAT IT REPRESENTS, WHETHER IT REPRESENTS VIEWS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS, YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK THOSE GOVERNMENTS.
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QUESTION: OKAY, BACK TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THEN, WOULD IT BE FAIR TO SAY THE USE OF THE TERM "PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS" IS A STEP BACKWARD FROM THE USE OF THE PHRASE "LEGITIMATE RIGHTS" THAT WAS USED IN THE SOVIET-AMERICAN JOINT DECLARATION OR DOES THIS SUPERSEDE THE PHRASE IN THE CODE WORD OF THE MIDDLE EAST?

ANSWER: NO, I THINK ONE OF THE DANGERS IN THE SITUATION WE ARE IN, BECAUSE THE ISSUES ARE SO COMPLICATED AND POSITIONS SO DEEPLY HELD, THAT IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS ONE IS IN DANGER OF GETTING INTO SEMANTIC GAMES. I WOULD URGE YOU NOT TO READ ANYTHING INTO THIS OTHER THAN A RESTATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN POSITION. IT WAS NOT AN EFFORT TO GET INTO NEGOTIATING LANGUAGE, ETC. IT WAS A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF OUR POSITION.

QUESTION: BUT THE ISRAELIS JUMP ON THOSE PHRASES PRETTY HEAVILY. WHEN CARTER TALKED ABOUT DEFENSABLE BOUNDARIES BACK IN THE SPRING YOU KNOW HOW THEY GO NUTS ON THIS EVEN IF ITS NOT A FORMAL OFFICIAL DOCUMENT. I KNOW IT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF WHAT HAPPENED IN AMMAN TODAY. THIS PARTICULAR PHRASE, "THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS." SEEMS TO BECOMING A LITTLE BIT MORE POPULAR WITH THE ISRAELIS.

ANSWER: I REALLY CANNOT SPEAK FOR THE ISRAELIS, IT IS A STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN POSITION AND IT HAS BEEN USED AS YOU ARE AWARE BY THE PRESIDENT IN ASWAN, IT IS A STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN POSITION. AS TO THE REACTIONS OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO IT THAT IS FOR THEM TO SAY.

QUESTION: THE USE OF ISSUES "THE PALESTINIAN ISSUES IN ALL ITS ASPECTS" IS GENERALLY TAKEN TO MEAN NOT ALL THE PALESTINIANS IN SITU BUT THE PALESTINIANS THE WORLD OVER. IS THAT WHAT IS MEANT HERE?

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ANSWER: I REALLY, CHARLIE, I REALLY CANNOT GO BEYOND THE LANGUAGE ITSELF THAT THE DEFINITION OF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AND THE PARTICULAR PHRASEOLOGY, WHAT IT MEANS IN ACTUAL PRACTICE, REALLY REMAINS TO BE WORKED OUT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, SO I REALLY DO NOT WANT TO TAKE A SENTENCE OUT OF A STATEMENT WHICH IS MEANT TO BE A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF OUR POLICY, AND GO INTO THE VARIOUS INGREDIENTS THAT COULD BE CONAINED IN IT.

QUESTION: DID MR. ATHERTON SEE ANY PROSPECTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE FOR WIDENING THE CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS TO INCLUDE LETS SAY JORDAN OR SYRIA?

ANSWER: THIS QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED IN GENERAL TERMS WITH HIS
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MAJESTY. I'D SAY THAT AT THIS STAGE, THE EFFORT OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY WAS TO GIVE KING HUSSEIN AS MANY DETAILS AS POSSIBLE, ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF WHERE WE STAND ON THE EFFORTS TO OBTAN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. NOW, I THINK WHEN LOOKING AT THIS THING, ONE HAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT NEITHER WE NOR THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSIONS OVER THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES CONSIDER IT A PAPER EXERCIS. THE DECLARATION OF PRINIPLES IS SEEN AS THE BASIS FOR BROADENING THE NEGOTIATIONS. AS TO WHAT HIS MAJESTY CHOSSES TO DO, OR ANY OF THE OTHER PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT, REGARDING THIS EFFORT, IS FOR THEM TO DECIDE IN TERMS OF THEIR OWN-NATIONAL INTEREST.

QUESTION: CAN I JUST EXPAND ON THIS A LITTLE BIT? DID THE ASST. SECRETARY OF STATE FIND ANY INDICATIONS DURING HIS TALKS THAT A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WOULD BE-ASSUMING THAT IT IS A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES THAT JORDAN HAS BACKED IN THE PAST WILL A SIMPLE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES BE ENOUGH TO BRING JORDAN INTO THE NEGOTIATION BECAUSE IT HAS INDICATED IN THE PAST THAT IT WILL NOT?

ANSWER: NED, I THINK THAT IS REALLY A QUESTION YOU HAVE TO PUT TO THE JORDANIAN GOVERNMENT AS TO THEIR POSITION ON THIS MATTER. I'VE EXPLAINED TO YOU THAT WHAT THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY WAS

TALKINGWITH KING HUSSEIN ABOUT TODAY WAS IN TERMS OF BRINGING HIM UP TO DATE ON WHERE WE STAND ON ACHIEVING A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. I THINK THE LAST SENTENCE IN THE STATEMENTSAYS, WE LOOK FORWAR TO CONTINUING THIS DIALOGUE AND TO HEARING IDEAS FROM KING HUSSEIN ABOUT THE WHOLE PROCESS.

QUESTION: DOES THAT MEN THAT ATHERTON WILL COME BACK HERE BEFORE HE GOES TO WASHINGTON?

ANSWER: NO, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY WILL BE GOING TO RIYADH AS I SAID. MONDAY EVENING, WE ARE GOING TO CAIRO THEN ON TUESDAY

EVENING WE WILL BE GOING BACK TO JERUSALEM AND FROM THERE WE WILL
BE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON FOR PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALKS
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WITH THE PRESIDENT.

QUESTION: WAS THERE ANY DISCUSSION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF KING
HUSSEIN MAKING A TRIP TO WASHINGTON IN THE NEAR FUTURE? THIS HAS
BEEN TALKED ABOUT.

ANSWER: THE SUBJECT DID NOT COME UP. QUESTION: SIR, MAY I ASK
ANOTHER QUESTION ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN
ASPECT OF THIS, PRESUMABLY IF THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN ALL ITS
ASPECTS HAS BEEN DISCUSSED THEN AT SOME POINT, THE MAIN MEDIATOR
THE U.S. WOULD PRESUMABLY WANT TO TALK WITH THE PALESTINIS, I
KNOW THE SENSITIVITY WITH THE PLO, THAT IS PRETTY MUCH OUT OF
THE QUESTION BECAUSE OF AMERICA'S COMMITMENT OT ISRAEL. BUT HAS
THERE BEEN ANY THOUGHT THAT EITHER THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
HIMSELF NOW IN THIS SHUTTLE MISSION OR POSSIBLY AMERICAN DIPLOMATS
INTHE AMERICA EMBASSY-SAY IN JERUSALEM TALONG TO SAY
PALESTINIANS ON THE WEST BANK, ALONG TO PALESTINIANS IN A
PROMINENT POSITIONSUCH ASTHESE AMERICAN PROFESSORS,IN OTHER
WORDS TO CARRY OUT ANY KIND OF MEANINGFUL TALKSWITH THE
PALESTINIANS OUSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PLO, WHICH OBVIOUSLY
IS OUT OF THE QUESTION OF THE U.S.? IS THERE ANY CHANCE OF
THIS HAPPENING DURING THE CURRENT TRIP?

ANSWER: THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW ARE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT IN
GETTING A DECLARATIONOF PRINCIPLES. AS TO WHAT MAY MERGE FROM
THOSE TALKS IN A DECLARATION, ETC. REMAINS TO BE SEEM. BUT AT
THIS STAGE THE CONCENTRATION IS ON ACHIEVING A DECLARATION OF
PRINCIPLES WHICH I REPEAT, ONE SHOULD UNDERSTAND, WE SEE THIS
AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS THAT ARE GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE
PLACE FOR A COMPREHSNSIVE SETTLEMENT. WE HAVE SAID THAT WE SEE
THE DECLARATION AS THE BASIS FOR BROADENING THE NEGTIATIONS,
BUT AS TO WHO EXACTLY WILL BE IN THOSE NEGOTIATIONS REMAINS FOR
THE FUTURE. AS YOU KNOW, OUR EMBASSY IS IN TEL AVIV AND NOT
IN JERUSALEM, WE HAVE A CONSUL GENERAL THERE. OKAY? THANK YOU.

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